



United States Mission to the OSCE

Statement on OMIK Re-Prioritizing

As delivered by Deputy Representative Douglas Davidson
to the Permanent Council, Vienna
March 30, 2004

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

We should like to join Ireland, speaking on behalf of the European Union, and we are sure others to follow, in welcoming Ambassador Fieschi to the Permanent Council today. We very much appreciate his coming to Vienna to inform us of developments in Kosovo, and also to report to us on possible steps, under his leadership, that the OSCE Mission in Kosovo might take to respond to the tragic inter-ethnic violence, that swept across that province earlier this month.

The ideas that Ambassador Fieschi, has presented to us here today are quite interesting and they deserve the benefit of careful reflection by all participating States, including my own. I would therefore ask for the Chair's indulgence and that of Ambassador Fieschi, to allow us time to offer more considered views after reflection in the nearest future.

With that said however, I want to make clear that the U.S. continues to place priority on helping Kosovars to meet international standards -- particularly regarding the rule of law, multi-ethnicity and freedom of movement. We are confident that our priorities mirror those of the countries of Southeastern Europe, of Europe as a whole, and indeed the OSCE as an organization. We begin from the premise that OMIK has a valuable role to play in this process.

We look forward to seeing details from Ambassador Fieschi and the Secretariat as to how OMIK proposes to implement the ideas presented here today via concrete programs. From our perspective, any new programs should be fully consistent with the standards already set out by the international community.

Of course, as always in this organization, it will be important for us to consider the resource implications for these programs. While we agree that a fresh look at what OMIK does is needed, we also must bear in mind that this might require a reprogramming of funds already earmarked for certain activities.

Without prejudicing the discussions we will have, and the decisions we might take about re-ordering, or re-formulating, the mission's tasks, we strongly believe it would be unwise and short-sighted to consider any scaling back of OSCE activity in Kosovo, particularly those activities dealing with the Kosovo Police Service and with further establishing the rule of law. We must continue to help the people of Kosovo get back on track.

Finally, let me thank Ambassador Fieschi once again for his honest assessment of the good, and the not-so-good in Kosovo. The work that he and his team are perform there has taken on renewed importance, and we pledge to him and his colleagues our assistance in helping him to focus OMIK on turning our organization's commitment into reality.

I Thank you, Mr. Chairman.